# Palm Ghosts – ‘Architecture’ reviewed

by Eoghan Lyng

***❊ "Forward thinking, aware, stately and balanced - sounds like a piece of architecture to me alright!", writes Eoghan Lyng of Nashville-based outfit Palm Ghost' new album 'Architecture.***

Ridley Scott trained as a set designer, Edward Hopper painted a whole series of esoteric buildings, Roger Waters and Nick Mason used their undergraduate studies in architectural design to build the seismic masterpiece *Dark Side of The Moon*. There’s something about architecture that inspires the artistic muse; simply look at Palm Ghosts newest work.

“The name Palm Ghosts comes from the idea that darkness can be found in broad daylight” Joseph Lekkas told Amelia Gregory in interview. “I always liked that kind of duality. You know, sad songs with major chords, danger lurking beneath the blue skies. ghosts haunting the whitewashed beaches and palm trees of coastal towns and resorts”.

Architecture by Palm Ghosts

Sadness and happiness, just like a piece of architecture. It’s a fitting metaphor for vocalist/bassist Joseph Lekkas, who sketched song ideas in May 2017 on paper, rehearsed the songs with the remaining four Nashville based band members, found a interlink between the masculine and feminine facets (the male / female co-lead vocals throughout), musically raising the records with the caged drum sounds and keyboard/guitar duets of the New Wave records of The Cure, XTC and Peter Gabriel. Forward thinking, aware, stately and balanced - sounds like a piece of architecture to me alright!

Now, however pretentious that writerly metaphor is, *Architecture* is a corking synth rock album, with some arresting drumming and fine bass work from Lekkas (he plays the lead fills with the seduction and meticulousness of John Deacon and Peter Hook). *The Crown and The Confidant* and *Rhythm to Rage* are bright and buoyant, rhythmic and riff centred, the guitar licks are sprightly played by Benjamin Jason Douglas and Jason Springman. *Red Horizon* opens with a crackling electronic pulse, leading to a fast paced rock track that’s

strangely danceable. If you're a sucker to the delightful eighties soundscapes of eighties greats *HeartBeat City* (The Cars) and *How Old Are You?* (Robin Gibb), then *Love In Winter* is a particularly potent go-to track, a swampy intro played with zeitgeist zest and zip.

Lekkas has an ear for synth pop as *The Hound* demonstrates. A Cinematic Dream Pop tale of American dreams dying, this is an air of highways flying down the road, a rocker in the Bruce Springsteen/Tom Petty school, but complete with 4AD dream synths and REM jangles. *Who Knew Me Better Than You?,* while a little watery in production, has that driving rock energy of seventies New Wave, sure to be a live favourite. *A Lover's Quarrel* is the most contemporaneous, hip-hop drums and reverb mikes makes this a Danger Mouse/Damon Albarn type classic (it's the best track on the album too!). Erica Whitney Wilkes sings with art pop ballast, rock heavy and hard hitting, but safe and sanguine too - they make a fine vocal pair!

It's the building blocks to success and *Architecture* may have a title that would wet the lips of an academic, but it also has the rock sound of a great new wave band, bringing guitars and keyboards in an esoteric and exciting fashion.

***❉ 'Architecture' is released by Ice Queen Records, and available through the regular online stores and streaming platforms as of June 8, 2018. Previous Palm Ghosts releases can be found via Bandcamp.***